A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING,

April 18th 1675.

By *John Tillotson*, D. D. Dean of *Canterbury*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

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PSAL. 119. 60.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandements.

IN the words immediately going before, you have the course which *David* took for the reforming of his life, and the success of that course; *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.* A serious reflection upon the past errors and miscarriages of his life, produced the reformation of it. And you have a considerable circum-

ſtance added in the words that I have now read to you, *viz.* that this reformation was ſpeedy and without delay, *I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* Upon due conſideration of his former life, and a full conviction of the neceſſity of a change, he came to a reſolution of a better life, and immediately put this reſolution in execution; and to declare how preſently and quickly he did it, he expreſſes it both affirmatively and negatively, after the manner of the *Hebrews*, who when they would ſay a thing with great certainty and *emphaſis*, are wont to expreſs it both ways, *I made haſte, and delayed not*; that is, I did with all imaginable ſpeed betake my ſelf to a better courſe.

And this is the natural effect of Conſideration; and the true cauſe why men delay ſo neceſſary a work, is becauſe they ſtifle their reaſon, and ſuffer themſelves to be hurried into the embraces of preſent objects, and do not conſider their latter end, and what will be the ſad iſſue and event of a wicked life. For if men

men would take an impartial view of their lives, and but now and then reflect upon themſelves, and lay to heart the miſerable and fatal conſequences of a ſinful courſe, and think whither it will bring them at laſt, and that the end of theſe things will be death and miſery: If the carnal and ſenſual perſon would but look about him, and conſider how many have been ruin'd in the way that he is in, how many lye *ſlain and wounded in it, that it is the way to hell, and leads down to the chambers of death*, this would certainly give a check to him, and ſtop him in his courſe.

For it is not to be imagined, but that *that* man who hath duly conſidered what ſin is, the ſhortneſs of its pleaſures, and the eternity of its puniſhment, ſhould reſolve immediately to break off his ſins, and to live another kind of life. Would any man be intemperate and walk after the fleſh, would any man be unjuſt and defraud or oppreſs his neighbour, be prophane and live in the contempt of God and Religion, or allow himſelf in any wick-

wicked courſe whatſoever, that conſiders and believes a Judgment to come, and that becauſe of theſe things the terrible vengeance of God will one day fall upon the children of diſobedience? It is not credible, that men who apply themſelves ſeriouſly to the meditation of theſe matters, ſhould venture to continue in ſo imprudent and dangerous a courſe, or could by any temptation whatſoever be trained on one ſtep farther in a Way that does ſo certainly and viſibly lead to ruine and deſtruction.

So that my work at this time ſhall be, to endeavour to convince men of the monſtrous folly and unreaſonableneſs of delaying the reformation and amendment of their lives; and to perſwade us to reſolve upon it, and having reſolved, to ſet about it immediately and without delay, in imitation of the good man here in the Text, *I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* And to this end, I ſhall

Firſt, Conſider the reaſons and excuſes which men pretend for delaying this neceſſary

ceſſary work, and ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of them.

Secondly, I ſhall add ſome farther Conſiderations, to engage us effectually to ſet about this work ſpeedily and without delay.

I. We will conſider a little the reaſons and excuſes which men pretend for delaying this neceſſary work, and not only ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of them, but that they are each of them a ſtrong reaſon and powerful argument to the contrary.

1. Many pretend, that they are abundantly convinced of the great neceſſity of leaving their ſins and betaking themſelves to a better courſe, and they fully intend to do ſo; only they cannot at preſent bring themſelves to it, but they hope hereafter to be in a better temper and diſpoſition, and then they reſolve by Gods grace to ſet about this work in good earneſt, and to go through with it.

I know not whether it be fit to call

this a Reaſon; I am ſure it is the greateſt cheat and deluſion that any man can put upon himſelf. For this plainly ſhews, that thou doſt not intend to do this which thou art convinced is ſo neceſſary, but to put it off from day to day. For there is no greater evidence that a man doth not really intend to do a thing, than when notwithſtanding he ought upon all accounts, and may in all reſpects better do it at preſent than hereafter, yet he ſtill puts it off. Whatever thou pretendeſt, this is a meer ſhift to get rid of a preſent trouble: It is like giving good words and making fair promiſes to a clamorous and importunate creditour, and appointing him to come another day, when the man knows in his conſcience that he intends not to pay him, and that he ſhall be leſs able to diſcharge the debt then, than he is at preſent. Whatever reaſons thou haſt againſt reforming thy life now, will ſtill remain and be in as full force hereafter, nay probably ſtronger than they are at preſent. Thou art unwilling now, and

ſo

ſo thou wilt be hereafter, and in all likelihood much more unwilling. So that this reaſon will every day improve upon thy hands, and have ſo much the more ſtrength, by how much the longer thou continueſt in thy ſins. Thou haſt no reaſon in the world againſt the preſent time, but only that 'tis *preſent*; why, when hereafter comes to be preſent, the reaſon will be juſt the ſame. So that thy preſent unwillingneſs is ſo far from being a juſt reaſon againſt it, that 'tis a good reaſon the other way; becauſe thou art unwilling now, and like to be ſo, nay more ſo hereafter, if thou intendeſt to do it at all, thou ſhouldſt ſet about it immediately, and without delay.

2. Another reaſon which men pretend for the delaying of this work, is the great difficulty and unpleaſantneſs of it. And it cannot be denied, but that there will be ſome bitterneſs and uneaſineſs in it, proportionably to the growth of evil habits, and the ſtrength of our luſts, and our greater or leſs progreſs and continuance in a ſinful courſe: So that we

muſt make account of a ſharp conflict, of ſome pain and trouble in the making of this change, that it will coſt us ſome pangs and throws before we be born again. For when nature hath been long bent another way, it is not to be expected that it ſhould be reduced and brought back to its firſt ſtreightneſs without pain and violence.

But then it is to be conſidered, that how difficult and painful ſoever this work be, it is neceſſary; and that ſhould overrule all other conſiderations whatſoever: that if we will not be at this pains and trouble, we muſt one time or other endure far greater, than thoſe which we now ſeek to avoid: that it is not ſo difficult as we imagine, but our fears of it are greater than the trouble will prove; if we were but once reſolved upon the work and ſeriouſly engaged in it, the greateſt part of the trouble were over; it is like the fear of children to go into the cold water, a faint trial increaſeth their fear and apprehenſion of it; but ſo ſoon as they have plunged into it, the

the trouble is over, and then they wonder why they were ſo much afraid. The main difficulty and unpleaſantneſs is in our firſt entrance into Religion, it preſently grows tolerable, and ſoon after eaſie, and after that by degrees ſo pleaſant and delightful, that the man would not for all the world return to his former evil ſtate and condition of life.

We ſhould conſider likewiſe, what is the true cauſe of all this trouble and difficulty; 'Tis our long continuance in a ſinful courſe that hath made us ſo loth to leave it; 'Tis the cuſtom of ſinning that renders it ſo troubleſome and uneaſie to men to do otherwiſe; 'Tis the greatneſs of our guilt, heightned and inflamed by many and repeated provocations, that doth ſo gall our conſciences, and fill our ſouls with ſo much terror; 'Tis becauſe we have gone ſo far in an evil way, that our retreat is become ſo difficult; and becauſe we have delayed this work ſo long, that we are now ſo unwilling to go about it; and conſequently, the longer we delay it, the trouble and difficulty

ficulty of a change will encreaſe daily upon us. And all theſe conſiderations are ſo far from being a good reaſon for more delays, that they are a ſtrong argument to the contrary: Becauſe the work is difficult now, therefore do not make it more ſo; and becauſe your delays have encreaſed the difficulty of it, and will do more and more, therefore delay no longer.

3. Another pretended encouragement to theſe delays, is the great mercy and patience of God. He commonly bears long with ſinners, and therefore there is no ſuch abſolute and urgent neceſſity of a ſpeedy repentance and reformation of our lives. Men have not the face to give this for a reaſon, but yet for all that, it lies at the bottom of many mens hearts: So *Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* 8. 11, *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the hearts of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.*

But it is not always thus. There are few of us but have ſeen ſeveral inſtances of

of Gods ſeverity to ſinners, and have known ſeveral perſons ſurprized by a ſudden hand of God, and cut off in the very act of ſin, without having the leaſt reſpite given them, without time or liberty ſo much as to ask God forgiveneſs, and to conſider either what they had done, or whither they were a-going. And this may be the caſe of any ſinner, and is ſo much the more likely to be thy caſe, becauſe thou doſt ſo boldly preſume upon the mercy and patience of God.

But if it were always thus, and thou wert ſure to be ſpared yet awhile longer; what can be more unreaſonable and disingenuous, than to reſolve to be evil becauſe God is good, and becauſe he ſuffers ſo long, to ſin ſo much the longer, and becauſe he affords thee a ſpace of repentance, therefore to delay it and put it off to the laſt? The proper deſign of Gods goodneſs is to lead men to repentance, and he never intended his patience for an encouragement to men to continue in their ſins, but for an op-

opportunity and an argument to break them off by repentance.

These are the pretended reasons and encouragements to men to delay their repentance and the reformation of their lives, and you see how groundless and unreasonable they are; which was the *first* thing I propounded to speak to.

II. I shall add some farther considerations, to engage men effectually to set about this work speedily, and without delay. And because they are many, I shall insist upon those which are most weighty and considerable, without being very curious and solicitous about the method and order of them: For provided they be but effectual to the end of perswasion, it matters not how inartificially they are rang'd and disposed.

1. Consider, that in matters of great and necessary concernment, and which must be done, there is no greater argument of a weak and impotent mind, then irresolution; to be undetermined, where the case is so plain, and the necessity so ur-

urgent; to be always about doing that, which we are convinced muſt be done.

Victuros agimus ſemper, nec vivimus unquam.

We are always intending to live a new life, but can never find a time to ſet about it. This is as if a man ſhould put off eating and drinking and ſleeping from one day and night to another, till he have ſtarved and deſtroyed himſelf. It ſeldom falls under any mans deliberation, whether he ſhould live or not, if he can chuſe; and if he cannot chuſe, 'tis in vain to deliberate about it. It is much more abſurd to deliberate, whether we ſhould live virtuouſly and religiouſly, ſoberly and righteouſly in the world; for *that* upon the matter is to conſult, whether a man ſhould be happy or not: Nature hath determined this for us, and we need not reaſon about it; and conſequently, we ought not to delay that which we are convinced is ſo neceſſary in order to it.

2. Consider, that Religion is a great and a long work; and asks so much time, that there is none left for the delaying of it. To begin with Repentance, which is commonly our first entrance into Religion: This alone is a great work, and is not only the business of a sudden thought and resolution, but of execution and action: 'Tis the abandoning of a sinful course, which we cannot leave till we have in some degree mastered our lusts; for so long as they are our masters, like *Pharaoh* they will keep us in bondage, and *not let us go to serve the Lord.* The habits of sin and vice are not to be plucked up and cast off at once; as they have been long in contracting, so without a miracle, it will require a competent time to subdue them and get the victory over them: for they are conquered just by the same degrees that the habits of grace and virtue grow up and get strength in us.

So that there are several duties to be done in Religion, and often to be repeated; many graces and virtues are to be

be long practiſed and exerciſed, before the contrary vices will be ſubdued, and before we arrive to a confirmed and ſetled ſtate of goodneſs; ſuch a ſtate as can only give us a clear and comfortable evidence of the ſincerity of our reſolution and repentance, and of our good condition towards God. We have many luſts to mortifie, many paſſions to govern and bring into order; much good to do, to make what amends and reparation we can for the much evil we have done: We have many things to learn, and many to unlearn, to which we ſhall be ſtrongly prompted by the corrupt inclinations of our nature, and the remaining power of ill habits and cuſtoms: and perhaps we have ſatisfaction and reſtitution to make for the many injuries we have done to others, in their perſons, or eſtates, or reputations: In a word, we have a *body of ſin* to put off, which clings cloſe to us, and is hard to part with; we have to *cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and to perfect holineſs in the fear of God*; to

encreaſe and improve our graces and virtues, to *add to our faith knowledg*, and *temperance*, and *patience*, and *brotherly kindneſs*, and *charity*; and *to abound in all the fruits of righteouſneſs*, *which are by Jeſus Chriſt to the praiſe and glory of God:* We have to be uſeful to the world, and exemplary to others in a holy and virtuous converſation; our *light is ſo to ſhine before men*, *that others may ſee our good works*, *and glorifie our father which is in heaven.*

And do we think all this is to be done in an inſtant, and requires no time? That we may delay and put off to the laſt, and yet do all this work well enough? Do we think we can do all this in time of ſickneſs and old age, when we are not fit to do any thing, when *the ſpirit of a man* can hardly *bear the infirmities* of nature, much leſs a guilty conſcience and *a wounded ſpirit*? Do we think that when the day hath been idlely ſpent and ſquandered away by us, that we ſhall be fit to work when the night and darkneſs comes? When our underſtanding

ſtanding is weak, and our memory frail, and our will crooked, and by a long cuſtom of ſinning obſtinately bent the wrong way, what can we then do in Religion? what reaſonable or acceptable ſervice can we then perform to God? when our candle is juſt ſinking into the ſocket, how ſhall *our light ſo ſhine before men, that others may ſee our good works*?

Alas! the longeſt life is no more than ſufficient for a man to reform himſelf in, to repent of the errors of his life, and to amend what is amiſs; to put our ſouls into a good poſture and preparation for another world, to train up our ſelves for eternity, and to make our ſelves *meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*.

3. Conſider, what a deſperate hazard we run by theſe delays. Every delay of repentance is a venturing the main chance. It is uncertain whether hereafter we ſhall have time for it, and if we have time, whether we ſhall have a heart to it, and the aſſiſtance of Gods grace to go thorough with it. God indeed hath been gra-

graciouſly pleaſed to promiſe pardon to repentance, but he hath no-where promiſed life and leiſure, the aids of his grace and holy Spirit to thoſe who put off their repentance: He hath no-where promiſed acceptance to meer ſorrow and trouble for ſin, without *fruits meet for repentance, and amendment of life:* He hath no-where promiſed to receive them to mercy and favour, who only give him good words, and are at laſt contented to condeſcend ſo far to him, as to promiſe to leave their ſins when they can keep them no longer. Many have gone thus far in times of affliction and ſickneſs, as to be awakened to a great ſenſe of their ſins, and to be mightily troubled for their wicked lives, and to make ſolemn promiſes and profeſſions of becoming better; and yet upon their deliverance and recovery all hath vaniſhed and come to nothing, and their *righteouſneſs hath been as the morning cloud, and as the early dew which paſſeth away:* And why ſhould any man, meerly upon account of a death-bed repentance, reckon

kon himſelf in a better condition than thoſe perſons, who have done as much, and gone as far as he; and there is no other difference between them but this, that the repentance of the former was tryed, and proved inſincere, but the *death-bed repentance* never came to a tryal; and yet for all that, God knows whether it were ſincere or not, and how it would have proved if the man had lived longer. Why ſhould any man, for offering up to God the meer refuſe and dregs of his life, and the days *which himſelf hath no pleaſure in*, expect to receive the reward of eternal life and happineſs at his hands?

But though we do not deſign to delay this work ſo long, yet ought we to conſider, that all delays in a matter of this conſequence are extremely dangerous; becauſe we put off a buſineſs of the greateſt concernment to the future and in ſo doing, put it to the hazard, whether ever it ſhall be done: For the future is as much out of our power to command, as it is to call back the time

which

which is paſt. Indeed if we could arreſt time, and ſtrike off the nimble wheels of his charriot, and like *Joſhua* bid the Sun ſtand ſtill, and make opportunity tarry as long as we had occaſion for it; this were ſomething to excuſe our delay, or at leaſt to mitigate and abate the folly and unreaſonableneſs of it: But this we cannot do. It is in our power, under the influence of Gods grace and holy Spirit, to amend our lives now, but it is not in our power to live till to morrow; and who would part with an eſtate in hand, which he may preſently enter upon the poſſeſſion of, for an uncertain reverſion? And yet thus we deal in the great and everlaſting concernments of our ſouls; we trifle away the preſent opportunities of ſalvation, and vainly promiſe to our ſelves the future; we let go that which is in our power, and fondly diſpoſe of that which is out of our power, and in the hands of God.

Lay hold then upon the preſent opportunities, and look upon every action thou doſt, and every opportunity of doing

ing any, as possibly thy last; for so it may prove, for any thing thou canst tell to the contrary. If a mans life lay at stake, and he had but one throw for it, with what care and with what concernment would he manage that action? What thou art doing next may, for ought thou knowest, be for thy life, and for all eternity. So much of thy life is most certainly past, and God knows thou hast yet done little or nothing towards the securing of thy future happiness: It is not certain, how much or how little is remaining, therefore be sure to make the best use of that little which may be left, and wisely to manage the last stake.

4. Seeing the delay of repentance doth mainly rely upon the hopes and encouragement of a future repentance, let us consider a little how unreasonable these hopes are, and how absurd the encouragement is which men take from them. To sin in hopes that hereafter we shall repent, is to do a thing in hopes that we shall be one day mightily ashamed of it,

that we ſhall one time or other be heartily grieved and troubled that we have done it: It is to do a thing in hopes that we ſhall afterwards condemn our ſelves for it, and wiſh a thouſand times we had never done it; in hopes that we ſhall be full of horrour at the thoughts of what we have done, and ſhall treaſure up ſo much guilt in our conſciences as will make us a terror to our ſelves, and be ready to drive us even to deſpair and diſtraction. And is this a reaſonable hope? Is this a fitting encouragement for a wiſe man to give to himſelf, to any action? And yet this is plainly the true meaning of mens going on in their ſins, in hopes that hereafter they ſhall repent of them.

5. If you be ſtill reſolved to delay this buſineſs, and put it off at preſent; conſider well with your ſelves, how long you intend to delay it. I hope not to the laſt; not till ſickneſs come, and death make his approaches to you. This is next to madneſs, to venture all upon ſuch an after-

after-game. 'Tis juſt as if a man ſhould be content to be ſhipwrackt, in hope that he ſhall afterwards eſcape by a plank, and get ſafe to ſhore. But I hope none are ſo unreaſonable; yet I fear that many have a mind to put it off to old age, though they do not care to ſay ſo. *Seneca* expoſtulates excellently with this ſort of men; "Who ſhall enſure thy "life till that time? Who ſhall paſs his "word for thee, that the providence of "God will ſuffer all things to happen "and fall out, juſt as thou haſt deſign-"ed and forecaſt them? Art thou not "aſhamed to reſerve the reliques of thy "life for thy ſelf, and to ſet apart only "that time to be wiſe and virtuous in, "which is good for nothing? How late "is it then to begin to live well, when "thy life is almoſt at an end? What a "ſtupid forgetfulneſs is it of our morta-"lity, to put off good reſolutions to "the fiftieth or ſixtieth year of our "age, and to reſolve to begin to do "better at *that* time of life, to which

"but very few perſons have reach-
"ed?

But perhaps thou art not altogether ſo unreaſonable, but deſireſt only to reſpite this work, till the firſt heat of youth and luſt be over, till the cooler and more conſiderate part of thy life come on: *that* perhaps thou thinkeſt may be the fitteſt and moſt convenient ſeaſon. But ſtill we reckon upon uncertainties, for perhaps that ſeaſon may never be: however, to be ſure it is much more in our power, by the aſſiſtance of Gods grace, which is never wanting to the ſincere endeavours of men, to conquer our luſts now, and to reſiſt the moſt heady and violent temptations to vice, than either to ſecure the future time, or to recover that which is once paſt and gone.

Some ſeem yet more reaſonable, and are content to come lower, and deſire only to put it off for a very little while. But why for a little while? why till to morrow? To morrow will be as this day,

only

only with this difference, that thou wilt in all probability be more unwilling and indiſpoſed *then.*

So that there is no *future* time which any man can reaſonably pitch upon. All delay in this caſe is dangerous, and as ſenſeleſs as the expectation of the *Ideot*, deſcribed by the *Poet*; who being come to the river ſide, and intending to paſs over, ſtays till all the water in the river be gone by, and hath left the channel a dry paſſage for him.

——————at ille
Labitur, & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

But the river runs, and runs, and if he ſhould ſtay a thouſand years, will never be the nearer being dry. So that if the man muſt go over, and there be a neceſſity for it, (as there is for Repentance) the onely wiſe reſolution to be taken in this caſe, is to wade or ſwim over as well as he can, becauſe the

the matter will never be mended by tarrying.

6. *Laſtly*, conſider what an unſpeakable happineſs it is, to have our minds ſettled in that condition, that we may without fear and amazement, nay with comfort and confidence, expect death and judgment. Death is never far from any of us, and the general Judgment of the world may be nearer than we are aware of; for *of that day and hour knoweth no man*: And theſe are two terrible things; and nothing can free us from the terror of them, but a good conſcience; and a good conſcience is only to be had, either by innocence, or by repentance and amendment of life. Happy man! who by this means is at peace with God, and with himſelf; and can think of death and judgment, without dread and aſtoniſhment. For *the ſting of death is ſin*, and the terror of the great day only concerns thoſe, who have lived wickedly and impenitently, and would not be perſwaded, neither by

by the mercies of God, nor by the fear of his judgments, to repent and turn to him: But if we have truely forſaken our ſins, and do ſincerely endeavour to live in obedience to the Laws and Commands of God, the more we think of death and judgment, the greater matter of joy and comfort will theſe things be to us. For *bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord when he comes ſhall find ſo doing.* Let us therefore, as ſoon as poſſibly we can, put our ſelves into this poſture and preparation; according to that advice of our bleſſed Saviour, *Luke* 12. 35, 36. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye your ſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord.*

And now I hope that enough hath been ſaid, to convince men of the great unreaſonableneſs and folly of theſe delays; nay, I believe, moſt men are convinced of it by their own thoughts, and that their conſciences call them fools

fools a thousand times for it. But O that I knew what to say, that might prevail with men, and effectually perswade them to do that, which they are so abundantly convinced is so necessary.

And here I might addres my self to the several ages of persons. You that are *young*, and have hitherto been in a good measure innocent, may prevent the Devil, and by an early piety give God the first possession of your souls; and by this means, never be put to the trouble of so great and solemn a repentance, having never been deeply engaged in a wicked life: You may do a glorious, I had almost said a meritorious thing, in cleaving stedfastly to God, and resolving to serve him, when you are so importunately courted, and so hotly assaulted by the Devil and the World. However, you may not live to be old; therefore upon that consideration begin the work presently, and make use of the

the opportunity that is now in your hands.

You that are grown up to *ripeneſs of years*, and are in the full vigor of your age; *you* are to be put in mind, that the heat and inconſiderateneſs of youth is now paſt and gone; that reaſon and conſideration are now in their perfection and ſtrength; that this is the very age of prudence and diſcretion, of wiſdom and warineſs: So that now is the proper time for you to be ſerious, and wiſely to ſecure your future happineſs.

As for thoſe that are *old*, *they* methinks ſhould need no body to admoniſh them, that it is now high time for them to begin a new life, and that the time paſt of their lives is too much to have ſpent in ſin and folly. There is no trifling where men have a great work to do, and but little time to do it in. Your Sun is certainly going down and near its ſetting, therefore you ſhould quicken your pace, conſidering that your

journey is never the ſhorter becauſe you have but little time to perform it in. Alas man! thou art juſt ready to dye, and haſt thou not yet begun to live? Are thy paſſions and luſts yet unſubdued, and have they had no other mortification than what age hath given them? 'Tis ſtrange to ſee, how in the very extremities of old age, many men are as if they had ſtill a thouſand years to live, and make no preparation for death, though it dogs them at the heels, and is juſt come up to them and ready to give them the fatal ſtroke.

Therefore let us not put off this neceſſary work of reforming our ſelves, in what part and age of our lives ſoever we be. *To day, whilſt it is called to day, leaſt any of you be hardened thorough the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* Nay, to day is with the lateſt to begin this work, had we been wiſe we would have begun it ſooner. 'Tis Gods infinite mercy to us, that it is not quite too late, that the day of Gods patience is not quite ex-

expired, and the door ſhut againſt us. Therefore do not defer your repentance to the next ſolemn time, to the next occaſion of receiving the bleſſed Sacrament: Do not ſay, I will then reform and become a new man, after *that* I will take leave of my luſts and ſin no more. For let us make what haſte we can, we cannot poſſibly make too much

——*properat vivere nemo ſatis.*

No man makes haſte enough to be good, to *ceaſe to do evil, and to learn to do well.* Be as quick as we will, life will be too nimble for us, and go on faſter than our work does; and death will go nigh to prevent us, and ſurprize us unawares.

Do, do *ſinner*, abuſe and neglect thy ſelf yet a little while longer, till the time of regarding thy ſoul and working out thy own ſalvation be at an end, and all the opportunities of minding that

great concernment be ſlipp'd out of thy hands, never to be recovered, never to be called back again; no, not by thy moſt earneſt wiſhes and deſires, by thy moſt fervent prayers and tears; and thou be brought into the condition of *prophane Eſau*, who for once deſpiſing the Bleſſing, loſt it for ever, *and found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.*

To conclude: Art thou convinced, that thy eternal happineſs depends upon following the advice which hath now been given thee? Why then, do but behave thy ſelf in this caſe, as thou and all prudent men are wont to do in matters which thou canſt not but acknowledg to be of far leſs concernment. If a man be travelling to ſuch a place, ſo ſoon as he finds himſelf out of the way, he preſently ſtops and makes towards the right way, and hath no inclination to go wrong any farther: If a man be ſick, he will be well preſently

if

if he can, and not put it off to the future: Moſt men will take the firſt opportunity that preſents it ſelf, of being rich or great; every man almoſt catches at the very firſt offers of a great place or a good purchaſe, and ſecures them preſently if he can, leaſt the opportunity be gone, and another ſnatch theſe things from him. Do thou thus ſo much more, in matters ſo much greater. Return from the error of thy way, be well, ſave thy ſelf as ſoon as poſſibly thou canſt. When happineſs preſents it ſelf to thee, do not turn it off, and bid it come again to morrow. Perhaps thou mayeſt never be ſo fairly offered again; perhaps the day of ſalvation may not come again to morrow; nay, perhaps *to thee* to morrow may never come. But if we were ſure that happineſs would come again, yet why ſhould we put it off? Does any man know how to be ſafe and happy to day, and can he find in his heart to tarry till to morrow?

Now

Now the God of all mercy and patience, give every one of us the wisdom and grace, to *know* and to do *in this our day, the things that belong to our peace, before they be hid from our eyes*; for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer; *To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever.* Amen.

Date 12 . 11

Name Hospital No.

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